

1 MR. DETLEFSEN: Yes, I'm Robert Detlefsen,
2 and I'm a Senior Research Fellow at the Competitive
3 Enterprise Institute, a nonprofit, public policy
4 research organization based here in Washington.

5 Madame Chairman, in your opening statement
6 at this Commission's first meeting last June, you
7 reminded your fellow Commissioners and the public that
8 the Commission's job is to focus narrowly on the
9 economic and sociological effects of legalized
10 gambling. As for the moral issues raised by gambling,
11 you expressed your hope that the religious community
12 would begin a dialogue on that subject.

13 Congress was correct, of course, to limit
14 the scope of this Commission's inquiry to empirical
15 questions, but as it attempts to follow that mandate,
16 this Commission runs the risk of overemphasizing those
17 aspects of gambling that readily lend themselves to
18 the quantitative research methodologies favored by
19 modern social scientists.

20 Indeed, that tendency is already reflected
21 in the Research Subcommittee's proposed study
22 questions that were distributed at yesterday's

1 session. The questions are overwhelmingly concerned
2 with such things as "the measurable costs of problem
3 gambling," the "quantifiable costs and benefits of
4 gambling," and the "effect of gambling establishments
5 on levels of employment and unemployment in a
6 geographic region."

7 Such topics dominate the subcommittee's
8 proposed research agenda not just because they are
9 important, for there is no denying that they are, but
10 also because we are conditioned by modern social
11 science to ignore phenomena that do not lend
12 themselves to counting and measuring.

13 Unfortunately, this bias may cause us to
14 overlook the importance in human affairs of such
15 things like individual freedom and personal
16 responsibility because it is difficult to quantify the
17 value that human beings derive from being free to
18 behave in accordance with their own singular tastes
19 and values.

20 Nevertheless, Madame Chairman, I would
21 respectfully urge you and your fellow Commissioners to
22 bear in mind that ours is a country that is admired

1 around the world for its embrace of personal freedom
2 and individual rights, and to recognize that these
3 quintessentially American values are threatened in the
4 current debate over legalized gambling.

5 The National Gambling Impact Study
6 Commission should begin from the premise that in a
7 free society the government bears a heavy burden to
8 justify restrictions on personal behavior. This is
9 especially so with respect to activities that most
10 citizens regard as benign and unobjectionable. Far
11 from being an aberrant form of behavior, legalized
12 gambling is a popular pastime that is enjoyed by
13 millions of Americans. Last year 32 percent of
14 American households visited a casino and 69 percent of
15 adults reported playing the lottery.

16 Whether certain business interests might
17 be disadvantaged by the advent of casinos, whether
18 state and local governments profit sufficiently from
19 commercial gambling enterprises, and whether some
20 people exercise their freedom to gamble in ways that
21 many of us would regard as unwise or irresponsible are
22 all matters that deserve the careful scrutiny of this

1 Commission.

2 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Detlefsen, I have
3 to ask you to stop at that point and would suggest
4 that the remainder of your comments will be entered
5 into the record and made available to all of the
6 Commissioners.

7 MR. DETLEFSEN: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: And thank you for
9 being here.

10 MR. DETLEFSEN: Thank you, Madame
11 Chairman.

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.
13 Felicia Grondin.

14 MS. GRONDIN: Good afternoon, ladies and
15 gentlemen. My name is Felicia Grondin, and I'm
16 legislative liaison for the New Jersey Casino Control
17 Commission.

18 I would also like to recognize
19 Commissioner Leanne Brown, who is here with us today,
20 who's a member of the New Jersey Casino Control
21 Commission and also a former State Senator.

22 I want to thank Chairperson Kay James and